

# CALIFORNIA LATINO CAUCUS



## LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS



Volume 2, Edition 1 — February 2008

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## California's Foundations: Lack of Diversity and Transparency

AB 624, the Foundation Diversity and Transparency Act, was introduced by Assembly Member Joe Coto to address an issue that has plagued the philanthropic sector for years: a lack of diversity and transparency. In 2006, the Legislative Tri-Caucus (Latino Caucus, Black Caucus, and Asian Pacific Islander Caucus) held a joint hearing to discuss philanthropic giving to communities of color, and after listening to over 20 witnesses concluded that more needed to be done. The result was the introduction of AB 624.

AB 624 requires public and private foundations in California with assets over \$250 million to collect and report organizational and grant making diversity data. This data includes the gender and ethnic diversity of the foundation's board of directors and staff, as well as the diversity of grants awarded to organizations serving minority, low socio-economic and LGBT communities. The collected data would then be posted on the foundation's web site and included in its annual report in a section labeled "Diversity."

Although foundations are granted tens of billions of dollars in tax exemptions each year for their philanthropy, research shows that 20% of grants awarded by the thirty largest California foundations

are awarded to minority recipient populations. At first, the figures seem reasonable. However, if you remove three foundations from the equation, the figure falls to below 10%. If you also look at the demographics of California, more than 55% of the population and 80% of the people most in need are minorities. This demonstrates that more can and should be done to assist our most underserved communities.

Unlike other industries that receive tax subsidies, foundations are not required to report how they are serving diverse and underrepresented communities. They are left in good faith, with the hope they will not only fund research, but also establish programs to assist communities who have traditionally been underserved philanthropically. However, as the figures above determine, not enough is being accomplished.

AB 624 is important "sunshine" legislation that will simply bring these issues to light. This transparency can and will enable foundations and the public to take a closer look, to evaluate grant making goals and history, and to potentially refocus diversity efforts.

The bill has been approved by the Assembly and will soon be heard in the Senate.

## Coto Introduces Community Investment Legislation

*Pressures Insurance Industry to Invest in Underdeveloped Communities*

Assembly Member Coto introduced AB 1910 to encourage the insurance industry to step up its investments in urban and economically underdeveloped communities. This bill puts increased pressure on insurance companies to make "community development investments" in California by requiring every company to adopt its own Community Development Investment Policy, and filing that policy with the Insurance Commissioner. If the Insurance Commissioner determines that the company is not taking adequate steps to meet its policy, the Commissioner is authorized to demand a plan of action from the company on how it will meet its own goals.

Last year, the Assembly Insurance Committee held a hearing on community development investments by major industries. Two key conclusions came from the hearing: 1) While some insurance companies are making community development investments in CA,

many are not, and few are making major investments; and 2) Other industries, such as banking and utilities, have done a far better job of investing in California communities. The lesson from these industries is that pressure from the Legislature, coupled with pressure from the industry's regulator, works.

Despite efforts to encourage Insurance Commissioner Poizner to focus on community development investments, he has done little to pressure insurance companies to invest in CA. The bill is designed to "light a fire" under both insurance companies, and the Commissioner.

Studies have shown when companies establish policies; it creates a natural incentive to meet that policy's goal. With the added element of oversight by the Insurance Commissioner, this bill will generate new investments in communities that are most in need of capital in order to prosper.

## President of Mexico Felipe Calderon Hinojosa meets with the California Latino Legislative Caucus



In his first visit to the United States since his taking office, Felipe Calderon Hinojosa, President of Mexico, visited California on Wednesday, February 13, 2008. He was accompanied by his wife, Margarita Zavala, and three governors from Mexico, one representing each political party of Mexico.

His agenda for Wednesday was marked by a closed door meeting with members from the Latino Caucus. Following the meeting, President Calderon addressed a joint session of the California Legislature.

During his speech, President Calderon addressed immigration concerns and the state

of the economy in Mexico. President Calderon's vision is a country in which no Mexican will leave the country in search for job opportunities. President Calderon views immigration as "taking productive people away from Mexico," a destructive force to the Mexican country. Since he assumed office in 2006, President Calderon estimated that Mexico has created 800,000 new jobs through the implementation of sound economic and fiscal policies and record number of investment in the nation. In regards to health care, since President Calderon took office, every child born in Mexico has access to medical insurance for their lifetime.

President Calderon concluded his speech by stating that an economically healthier Mexico would minimize illegal immigration better than a strict border enforcement approach.

Later in the day, President Calderon also met with Governor Schwarzenegger, and they both signed an agreement to work together and fight climate change, thus concluding his visit to Sacramento.

## Quote of the Month:

"To sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards of men."

*Abraham Lincoln*



Latino Caucus members enjoyed their private meeting with President Calderon.



Assemblymember Arambula and President Calderon discuss the economy in the USA.



President Calderon and Assembly Member Mendoza pose for a picture.

## Upcoming Events

### **Tues., February 26**

Latino Caucus Meeting  
State Capitol, Maddy  
Lounge 11:00 a.m.  
(Members only)

### **Friday, March 7**

Latino Caucus  
Speaker Series by  
Kenneth Burt: The  
Search for a Civic  
Voice: California  
Latino Politics  
Please RSVP to:  
Esmeralda at (916)  
651-4022

### **Tues., March 11**

Latino Caucus Meeting  
State Capitol, Maddy  
Lounge 11:00 a.m.  
(Members only)



Adriana Ruelas and  
Minnie Santillan at the  
Latino Caucus Staff  
Retreat.



LA County Supervisor  
Gloria Molina was the  
keynote speaker at the  
Latino Caucus Staff  
Retreat.



Latino Caucus staff  
worked together on  
several issues which  
included "branding".

## Looming Deadline & Legislative Priorities

With the recent buzz surrounding the California primary elections, it's hard to imagine that anything else goes on in Sacramento other than elections. However, the election is simply the first step in a long process by which Members are entrusted to be the voice of their community. Once elected, Member's represent the best interest of their constituents. One way to do so is by enacting legislation that will establish laws or improve current laws. An important date in this process is February 22; the Legislature's deadline for Member's to introduce bills.

Legislative ideas will soon become bills. Many communities will put their hopes and futures on bills that will begin navigating through the tumultuous terrain that is the legislative process. As the deadline nears, Legislators prepare by researching ideas, speaking with policy experts and listening to constituents concerns.

The Latino Caucus will also soon decide on priority bills that will best serve our Latino

community. In light of California's staggering fiscal deficit, the legislative priorities will continue to advance our highest legislative concerns. Utilizing the Latino Caucus' guiding principles, Members will introduce legislation to help our communities. Legislative ideas that are a high priority for Members of the Latino Caucus include automatic voter registration, the inclusion of the landmark court case of Mendez vs. Westminster into our public school curriculum, and a bill to provide additional assistance to veterans who are suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), to name a few.

The legislative priorities for the Latino Caucus will continue to protect the most vulnerable in our society. As has been the case since the inception of the "Chicano Legislative Caucus" (later renamed the Latino Legislative Caucus) in 1973, the caucus will continue to support the legislative priorities in hopes of creating a better California for all. 34 years and 67 Members later, the Latino Caucus remains a strong force in the Legislature.

## Elected Official Inspires Latino Caucus Staff

The California Latino Legislative Caucus hosted a successful staff retreat in January to help inspire legislative staff and enlighten them about the role they play in the Legislature. More than 80 legislative staff attended, including chiefs of staff, committee consultants and legislative fellows. As one of the first groups to host an event at the newly opened riverfront hotel, Le Rivage, the legislative staff enjoyed a peaceful and productive retreat while taking in the beautiful scenery of the Sacramento River.

The morning started with a keynote speech from the first Latina elected to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Honorable Supervisor Gloria Molina. Having the experience of a scheduler, legislative staff, and chief of staff at the State Capitol, Supervisor Molina stressed the important role legislative staff plays for their Member and their communities. Supervisor Molina's speech left staff with a feeling of empowerment and they felt validated for the work they do.

Latino Caucus Chairman, Assemblymember Joe Coto, then addressed the staff and discussed the

guiding principles of the Latino Caucus. He explained that the overall goal of the Caucus is to develop a Latino community that is engaged at all levels of business, a workforce that is prepared and well qualified for our evolving economy, healthy families that live in safe communities, and residents that are engaged in civic debate at all levels of government. He stressed that in many occasions legislative staff is our community's last hope and that they must do what they can to help.

Attendees also enjoyed a presentation by the Greenlining Institute, the California Latino Youth Leadership Project, and were involved in a discussion about 'name branding' the Latino Caucus. At the end of the retreat, attendees stated they enjoyed the retreat because they realized "How I am the cause of change in California" and "I have the ability to inspire my community and transform their quality of life." They left the retreat with better relationships with fellow staffers, an expanded network, and a greater sense of the role they play in the legislative process.

## Educational Opportunity Report

*The Racial Opportunity Report*

On February 13, 2008 The Latino Issues Forum partnered with UCLA Institute for Democracy, Education and Access (UCLA/IDEA), UC All Campus Consortium On Research for Diversity (UC ACCORD), and the UCLA Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies to release the **2007 Educational Opportunity Report: The Racial Opportunity Gap** which highlights the systematic inadequacies and inequalities faced by African American and Latino students as they navigate California's K-12 system. The reports that were distributed included detailed district information about the learning conditions at every California school.

As part of the collaboration, the groups announced a new statewide initiative that will make data about every middle and high school

available to parents in both Spanish and English. In addition to a new web-based Spanish language version of the report, an interactive parent training has been developed to teach parents how to access data about their children's schools.

The report disclosed that 9 out of 10 California public school students enter high school with plans to graduate and enroll in college. Yet, for every 100 Latino 9<sup>th</sup> graders in 2002, only 54 graduated high school four years later and only 15 graduated having completed the required college preparatory coursework. The report concluded that closing the Latino "achievement gap" in California will require the state to close the Latino "opportunity gap."

## Senate Majority Leader Gloria Romero and the Latino Caucus Announce the 2008 State of California Education Forum

Education is commonly referred to as the cornerstone of our society. Knowing this, long-time school administrator and now Assemblymember Coto, Chair of the Latino Caucus, has teamed up with Senate Majority Leader Gloria Romero to sponsor education forums throughout the state. At the forums they will discuss the condition of California's education system with teachers, parents, local elected officials, school administrators and members of the community.

Many Californians have been confronted with harrowing statistics on California's K-12 education system. The most commonly referred to are the national figures that rank California 47<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states in 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading and 45<sup>th</sup> out of 50 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade math.

These poor outcomes can be better understood by the one-size fits all policies applied to our diverse student population. The time has come to discuss education practices and how they affect California's multicultural and multilingual population. Communities throughout the state will have the opportunity to engage in this discussion through participation in a series of State of California Education Forums to be held throughout California.

The first education forum will take place in San Jose, CA on Thursday March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. For more information regarding this and future Education Forums, please contact Vianey Nuñez at (916) 651-4024.

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### WEB ADDRESS

<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/LatinoCaucus/>

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For more information, please contact Minnie Santillan at 319-2023 or [minnie.santillan@asm.ca.gov](mailto:minnie.santillan@asm.ca.gov)

### "La Verdad"

\* According to the **California Post Secondary Education Commission**, the total number of students in College as of 2006 is **2,269,221**; **Latinos** comprise **26.6 %** (598,158) of the total students enrolled in college statewide.

\* According to the **Latino Business Association**, California is home to over 500,000 Latino - owned businesses.

\* While the number of California Latino-owned businesses are low compared to the Latino share of the population, exceptions occur: 93% of agriculture sector businesses in the Fresno area are Latino owned.



The Latino Caucus Hosted a Breakfast Reception for Food for the Hungry.



There were many members and staff that attended the reception for Food for the Hungry.